

# SISTER CITY CELEBRATION

The SUNY College at Oneonta, the Oneonta City Schools, the City of Oneonta and the Ninash Foundation will be celebrating the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sister City Project from **April 15-30, 2008**.

The Ninash Foundation of Oneonta, whose mission is “to promote literacy among children and adults throughout the world” along with the SUNY Oneonta Learn and Serve Program lead by **Ashok Malhotra** and **Suzanne Miller**, established the first Indo-International Elementary School for 50 underprivileged children of Dundlod, Rajasthan, India. The school was built with the financial help of the student/faculty volunteer participants of the SUNY Program and the members of the local community.

The Ninash Foundation’s project has grown from one to three elementary schools and a high school educating more than 750 poorest of poor children of India. Sixty participants from SUNY Learn and Serve Program in India have contributed their volunteer services to help build these four Indo-International Schools.

The Indo-International Schools transform villages in India, building hope, self-confidence and courage among the impoverished children and adults. Beyond their direct impact, the schools have promoted an understanding and exchange among different cultures. Students, faculty and staff of the SUNY College at Oneonta have united in support of the project through the Learn and Serve in India program and the Center for Social Responsibility and Community with the leadership of **Linda Drake** and **Dr. Malhotra**.

The City of Oneonta Common Council, at their regular meeting of December 5, 2000, headed by then Mayor **Kim Muller**, made the Proclamation by endorsing the Sister City Project between Oneonta, NY, USA and Dundlod, Rajasthan, India. The Proclamation encourages “...the continued exchange of information and financial assistance through the Ninash Foundation in order to share the values of educational justice, fairness and opportunity through the establishment of additional schools throughout India similar to Dundlod.”

In January 2001, **Dr. Alan Donovan**, President of SUNY College at Oneonta accompanied the SUNY group to Dundlod, India where he opened a new library and a computer center by sending the first e-mail to Mayor Kim Muller. During the ceremony that was attended by the local dignitaries of Dundlod, Dr. Donovan read the proclamation by declaring Oneonta and Dundlod as sister cities.

The day to day running of the Indo-International Schools in India is done by the three dedicated principals who have positively affected the lives of each of these children and more than 15,000 people that live in these remote villages where the four schools are located. In recognition of their contribution to promoting literacy in their isolated villages, the SUNY College at Oneonta and the Ninash Foundation have joined hands in inviting these principals from India to bond with the Oneonta community by celebrating the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sister City Project from April 15-30, 2008.

Don’t miss our Sister City Celebration on **Friday, April 25** from **6:00 PM–Midnight** to be held at the **Hunt Union Ball Room**. Celebrations will include: Third grade children from the Oneonta Schools giving a presentation and principals from India will be welcomed and recognized. Among the various clubs and organizations that have been fundraising, the group raising the most will be acknowledged, followed by classical Indian dancers along with a Bollywood dance party until midnight. Something for everyone to enjoy!

For more information regarding the Sister City Celebration, contact **Linda Drake** at **x2633** or e-mail at **[www.ninashfoundation@yahoo.com](mailto:www.ninashfoundation@yahoo.com)**.